



Western South Dakota Outdoor Report

Wildlife Division Region 1
November 14, 2014



DATE: 11/12/2014

North District (Lawrence, Butte, Harding, Perkins, Meade & Ziebach)

Reporting Officer: DCOS Apland, WCO's Eastman, Mutschler, Fees & Hein

Fishing Report:

Lawrence County –Fishing activity has slowed down as we transition to the ice fishing season.

Butte County – Anglers fishing Orman have been scarce due to the recent cold weather. As the ice forms the activity will slow. Please keep a safety mind-set while stepping on the ice in the upcoming weeks. Help us keep the aquatic nuisance out of our lakes!

Perkins County – The majority of fisherman have been struggling to catch many fish at Shadehill. But a few are having limited luck with walleye and crappie. What fish that are being caught look fat and healthy.

Meade County – Activity has been slow throughout Meade County with minimal fishing activity for both Meade and Ziebach Counties. Bear Butte has seen supplementary stocking of several fish species recently.

Ziebach – Anglers reports have been limited in recent weeks.

Hunting Report:

- The Black Hills Firearm season is open and hunters are having some success. There are quality deer still in the Black Hills. This past year's precipitation has created quality habitat allowing for great antler growth. The hunters that are walking areas are seeing decent numbers of deer. The rut is just starting and the next couple weeks will provide a great opportunity to catch that big buck following the does.
- West River Firearm Deer opens up on the 15th of November. Hunters please ensure that you acquire the necessary permission to access private land. Also, if you see a violation occur in the fields please remember to gather as much information without making contact with the violator. Please call the TIPS hotline with information. There are still good numbers of deer throughout the North West. Good Luck This Weekend Hunters!
- Archery deer season is open and although deer numbers are down throughout most of western SD hunters can still have a quality archery hunting experience. With the recent cold temperatures the activity has increased. In some of the prairie areas the hunters have been reporting that the deer are starting the rut. In the farm countries of NW South Dakota more whitetail deer are becoming visible as the corn is coming out. Remember to respect the land, landowners, and wildlife by following rules and taking good ethical shots.
- The Elk Prairie Units are now closed for the month and will re-open for December. The season has been great thus far. Hunters have been harvesting some very nice elk.
- Pheasant season is open and hunters have been reporting a much better hunt this year than last. With the harvesting of the corn fields in Perkins County more pheasants are being seen. Most hunters are harvesting between 1 and 2 birds on average in Perkins County and 1 bird for Ziebach County.
- Duck season also opened October 11th for the High Plains region. The resident duck numbers are good and can be found on many ponds throughout northwest SD. It would be a good idea to go hunting ducks with a seasoned duck hunter that can help in duck identification. The daily duck limit is such that positive identification is very important before the shot is taken.

Grouse numbers have been good and hunter response has been positive. Hunters are having to put their walking shoes on to get birds out from all the cover but



Western Prairie Lake and dams:

Fishing has been slow.

Please read the Western Lakes Regulations when fishing due to the changes of limits and sizes of fish in each lake.

Things to Remember:

- With the hunting season upon us, hunters please be cognizant of the fire dangers. Pay close attention to vehicle travel, cigarette butts, camp fires, and all other potential fire starters. It is always a good idea to take along a fire extinguisher just in case!
- Backcountry roads when wet are a mess. Please avoid tearing up roads and private driveways when possible.
- Hunters please remember baiting wildlife for the purpose of hunting is illegal. Step up to the challenge, don't bait.
- Dove hunters are required to harvest doves in flight and 50yrd from the road.
- Archery hunters should review recent regulation updates before entering the field.

Please remember to get the 2014 Hunting Handbook and read up on new changes for this year. Also, the 2014 Hunting Atlas is out. Please review due to changes in WIA land this year in certain locations.

Fall survey is still in progress. As of now the department is surveying antelope, turkey and deer in the Black hills. The State of South Dakota Pheasant survey has been completed and you can find the results on the GFP website.

PLEASE REMEMBER WITH DRIER WEATHER/GRASS BRINGS HIGHER FIRE DANGER. PEOPLE RESPECTFUL ON PUBLIC AREAS WITH THE FALL HUNTING SEASON APPROACHING.

Region 1 Wildlife Report

District

(SE Lawrence, S Meade, C Pennington, E Pennington, Haakon, N Jackson, NE Custer)

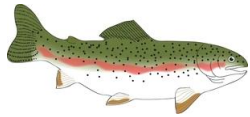
Reporting Officer: WCO's Brainard, Edwards, Geigle, Keeton, Thomsen

DATE: 11/13/2014

Central DCOS McCormick

Fishing Activity: Western South Dakota

Black Hills area lakes and streams:



Tough week for fishing! Area lakes and streams are still open and we will monitor them and report ice development next week.

Wildlife:

Deer:

Archery, youth, and Black Hills Firearms deer seasons are currently open. Deer numbers seem to be up from last year and bucks are starting to move. It's an exciting time of year, but remember, it's only fun if it's safe. Some common violations reported during the Black Hills deer season are: No orange, shooting from a motor vehicle, shooting from the road, failure to tag, and shooting too close to a residence. West River rifle deer season will open this Saturday November 15th.

Waterfowl:

The duck season is currently open and the Canada Goose season (for Unit 2) opened on November 3rd.

County	Pennington		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE	1	1	0
NW	0	0	0
SE	1	1	0
SW	0	0	0

Please remember to pick up your copy of the 2014 Hunting Handbook and read up on new changes for this year. Also, the 2014 Hunting Atlas is out. Please review a new copy of the

Pennington

2014 WIA atlas as some changes in private land enrollment may have changed from last year.		
County		
	Canadas	Ducks
NE	1	1
NW	0	0
SE	1	1
SW	0	0

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The State of South Dakota Pheasant survey has been completed and you can find the results on the GFP website.

County	Pennington		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE	1	1	0
NW	0	0	0
SE	1	1	0
SW	0	0	0

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Region 1 Wildlife Report

Southern District

Fishing Activity:

Date: 11/10/2014

County: Bennett/East Shannon/South Jackson

Reporting Officer: WCO Tom Beck

Fishing Activity:

A few trout are being caught on the Cedar Creek Trout Ponds. Please remember to stay on the trails and follow refuge rules when crossing their lands.



Hunting Report:

Waterfowl – While hunters had some luck hunting ducks, geese, and sandhill cranes on some of the smaller private waters last week, the weather is changing everything. The cold weather will freeze over the sandhill lakes and force the birds to either leave or head for the refuge. Ducks can still be found on the sandhill spring areas which stay open all year. Please remember to ask permission before entering onto private lands.

Small Game – Weather and crops continue to be the news when it comes to small game hunting. About half of the crops are harvested locally, but that still leaves a lot of standing corn and sunflowers for the birds to hide in. And, at this stage of the season, there are no dumb birds. Public land birds head to places of safety at sunrise and do not return to roost until dark. Private lands hunters had better luck finding birds to harvest. The cold spell will likely force birds to head for heavier cover and perhaps make them a little more accessible for those willing to brave the elements.

Big Game – Weather has the mule deer moving to their wintering areas. The rut looks like it is in full swing. As I mentioned before though, deer numbers are down. Do not expect to see large numbers of deer or large bucks. Both are pretty well gone. There are still some deer out there, but keep your expectations low and you will not risk being discouraged. Please remember to ask permission and follow the big game hunting rules when hunting during the west river deer season.

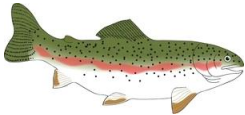


Date: 11/11/2014

County: **West Custer/West Pennington**

Reporting Officer: WCO Jacob Ehlert

Fishing: Deerfield- Fishing is slow.



Small Game: Rabbit hunters are doing well in the snow.

Big Game:

Black Hills Deer- Deer hunters are having great success. The mule deer rut is on. The whitetail rut is starting heavy. Hunters out in the snow found deer bedded on south faces in heavy timber. Midweek the hunting pressure is light, it's a great time to be out.

If you have a black hills deer tag the time to hunt is now.

District Report: This 4x4 mule deer buck was shot and left to rot near Spring Creek Road in Pennington County on 11/1/2014.



If you have any information please call TIPS at 1-888-OVERBAG or your local Sheriff's Office. Making the call can prevent poachers from stealing YOUR public resource!



Date: 11/10/2014

County: **East Custer/South Pennington**

Reporting Officer: WCO Ron Tietsort

Fishing Activity: We will be building ice on the area lakes and ponds with highs in the single digits and some below 0 lows this week; it might be time to start thinking about changing line on the ice rods and tip-ups

Lakota, Bismarck and Horse thief lakes have all been drained for the fall and winter, some fish have been removed and transferred to other waters. Work on cleaning out the sediment should begin as soon as we get a hard freeze.

Big Game: Black Hills deer season opened on Saturday November 1st. Even if you are not a hunter it's a good idea to wear some florescent orange when out hiking, horseback riding etc.

The weather was very warm for the opening weekend but some hunters still had success. As always, this season just gets better as the deer move into the rut.

Now that we are getting some cold temperatures and snow fall, it feels more like hunting season.

West River deer season starts up this Saturday (November 15th) looks like we can expect highs to be in the mid 20's for opening weekend in the Custer area.

Small Game: Not much to report, some sharp-tail grouse hunting is available in the eastern portion of the district.

ESTIMATED WATERFOWL STATUS/OPPORTUNITY FOR CUSTER COUNTY:

County	CUSTER		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE	1	1	0
NW	0	0	0
SE	1	1	0
SW	0	0	0

County	Pennington		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE			
NW	0	0	0
SE			
SW	0	0	0

District Report:

There is a lot of traffic in the Black Hills with the deer season upon us. It seems like the number of road hit deer goes up this time of year as well. Be sure to slow down and scan as you are driving.

And as always, if you witness a wildlife violation, try to get as much information as you can and call your local Wildlife Conservation Officer or the tips hotline.

1-888-683-7224.

Date: 11/10/2014

County: **Bennett/East Shannon/South Jackson**

Reporting Officer: WCO Tom Beck

Fishing Activity:

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Hunting Report:

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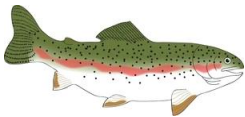


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NE	1	1	0
NW	0	0	0
SE	1	1	0
SW	0	0	0

County	Pennington		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE			
NW	0	0	0
SE			
SW	0	0	0

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1-888-683-7224.

Date: 11/4/2014

County: **Fall River**

Reporting Officer: WCO DJ Schroeder

Fishing Activity:



Just before the storm rolled in anglers were reporting catching nice crappie, walleye and bass at Angostura. The hot spots for the crappies seemed to be around the tires and over by the dam.

**Hunting Report:
Date: 11/4/2014**

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Hunting Report:



Small Game: I have been seeing a few more pheasants around this last week. Not sure if the weather or the crops coming out played the bigger role. Didn't see much for hunters this past weekend. We did have some duck and goose hunters. They had some success in areas. I believe the opportunities will increase with the cold weather putting the freeze on all the prairie ponds.

ESTIMATED WATERFOWL STATUS/OPPORTUNITY FOR FALL RIVER COUNTY AND WESTERN SHANNON COUNTY:

County	FALL RIVER		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

County	WESTERN SHANNON		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

appear to being going into the rut early this year. Bucks were really chasing the does this past week. Youth and mentored hunters seem to be more frequent this year. They should have some good opportunities out there this year.

Land Report:

Hunters are reminded to watch for the "off-road" travel restrictions while hunting on the State Game Production Areas, Walk-In Areas, and US Forest Service Black Hills and Grasslands properties. Hunters should also remember to be extremely careful with fire dangers this fall.



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ESTIMATED WATERFOWL STATUS/OPPORTUNITY FOR FALL RIVER COUNTY AND WESTERN SHANNON COUNTY:

County	FALL RIVER		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

County	WESTERN SHANNON		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

ESTIMATED WATERFOWL STATUS/OPPORTUNITY FOR FALL RIVER COUNTY AND WESTERN SHANNON COUNTY:

County	FALL RIVER		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

County	WESTERN SHANNON		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

A few trout are being caught on the Cedar Creek Trout Ponds. Please remember to stay on the trails and follow refuge rules when crossing their lands.

Hunting Report:



Waterfowl – There are a few Canadian Geese around the area. They are spread across the area with some on the refuge and others on private lakes, particularly in the Sandhill region. The flight from the refuge every morning lasts only a few minutes at this time. Likewise, there are some ducks in the area and they are also spread across the private ponds and lakes. We haven't had any weather to move them lately so jump shooting has been the only way hunters were successful.

Small Game – Weather continues to be the news when it comes to pheasant hunting. Until recently, the weather has been warm and the pheasants hard to find. It has cooled off, but public lands pheasants are still hard to find. Many have moved onto private lands to avoid the hunting pressure. Others spend their days in the unharvested crop fields and not coming out until the end of shooting time. While the crops are slowly being harvested, the days of easy dumb birds are gone until next season. Expect experienced, hard to get within gun range birds if hunting public lands. I have seen a few more grouse lately as the

sunflowers harvest proceeds. As the weather cools, more birds will start moving into the cropped areas from the Sandhills also.

Big Game – I've had quite a few inquiries lately asking where all of the deer are. Basically, we had such warm nice weather that most of the deer are spread out and have not yarded in their traditional wintering areas. Some deer may still be in standing crops. But we need to remember that it is a different deer herd now compared to past years. The EHD die offs of the last couple of years have reduced the number of whitetails and mule deer considerably. Deer herd dynamics have changed considerably with most of the herd made up of young animals. This is especially true of the bucks. Don't expect to see large mature bucks this year. The majority in the population are younger bucks. There are little bunches of deer here and there, but not the big herds of the past. Public lands deer are few and far between as upland game pressure have either forced the deer to become nocturnal or moved them onto private lands. I strongly suggest that if you have a deer license for this area that you scout the area prior to the season opener and try to obtain permission on private lands. Public land hunting will be very competitive for a few nter conflicts, but fortunately the hunters won. A couple of local hunters have told me they quit taking their dogs out until it cools off and the snakes are down their holes as heat and snake bites were too real a concern to take them hunting. A lot of other hunters have evidently just quit going out until the weather changes as hunting pressure dropped considerably. Likewise, the number of nonresident hunters have dropped considerably. The ones that have stuck it out are reporting pretty good success, but they are working all day for their birds. The good news is that the corn and sunflower harvest is in full swing so the birds may not have standing crops to hide in down the road. Once the harvest is over, it may be pretty good hunting later in the season.

Big Game – The refuge deer hunters reported a very disappointing hunt/harvest. There were not a lot of deer in the refuge this last season. While deer numbers are considerably lower than in past years, the standing crops outside of the refuge attracted the remaining deer making for a very slow hunt. Hopefully as the crops are harvested, more deer will filter back toward the refuge. I say hopefully as I'm getting questions from locals asking if I am seeing any deer. While I have been seeing some and have made the same assumption that others have that the deer are in the corn and sunflower fields, I'm not seeing additional deer in those areas that have been harvested. There is so much cover and the weather hasn't been good for deer movements that I suspect as fall turns toward winter more will show. Once the rut starts and deer start moving, we should know more. While there were several elk harvested a week ago, this last week was move some additional animals in the next week or so. Traditionally, elk harvest will slow once the crops are out of the field so I'd suggest coming now if you have a tag.

District Report-

Big Game – I have found one more whitetail deer (a buck) which likely died of EHD. If you find any safety course planned for the nights of September 24 – 26 in Martin. Please contact Gary Rayhill or Tom Beck for more information.

Big Game – Several elk were killed last week. It is still tough hunting as most crops are still standing in the fields, but at least a few elk were in the area. The refuge deer hunt has been tough also. With all of the standing crops outside of the refuge and the die off of the last couple of years, deer numbers inside the refuge are low and hunters are having some issues finding deer to shoot. I don't look for any change until crops are harvested this fall.

District Report: If you are going camping in the Black Hills Fire Protection District remember no open fires outside of designated campgrounds.

If you witness a violation please call TIPS at 1-888-OVERBAG or your local Sheriff's Office. Making the call can prevent poachers from stealing YOUR public resource!



District Report: If you are going camping in the Black Hills Fire Protection District remember no open fires outside of designated campgrounds. This has been an issue lately.

If you witness a violation please call TIPS at 1-888-OVERBAG or your local Sheriff's Office. Making the call can prevent poachers from stealing YOUR public resource!



with anglers.
the water.

County:

Reporting Officer: WCO Ron Tietzort

Fishing Activity:



Not much to report on this week. I was busy with the hunting seasons and didn't get much of a chance to visit. The high winds discouraged many from going out on
Date: 11/3/2014

East Custer/South Pennington

Fishing Activity: There is some excellent trout fishing going on right now, Center, Legion and Sylvan lakes are producing some nice rainbows. Stockade Lake is good for pan fish and an occasional northern pike.

Lakota, Bismarck and Horse thief lakes have all been drained for the fall and winter, some fish have been removed and transferred to other waters. Work on cleaning the sediment out should begin soon.

Big Game: Black Hills deer season opened on Saturday November 1st, even if you are not a hunter it's a good idea to wear some florescent orange when out hiking, horseback riding etc.

The weather was very warm for the opening weekend but some hunters still had some success, as always, this season just gets better as the deer move into the rut.

Small Game: Not much to report, some sharp-tail grouse hunting is available in the eastern portion of the district.

Hunting Report:

Date: 11/4/2014

County: **Fall River**

Reporting Officer: WCO DJ Schroeder

Fishing Activity:



This last weekend produced a variety of fish at Angostura. Anglers had walleye, bass, and crappies in the live-wells. Fishing is spotty, but they are being harvested on a weekly basis.

Hunting Report:



Small Game: Hunters continue to have some success with the pheasants. The bird numbers are definitely down from a few years ago - - but more are showing up in the field and giving hunters a few more chances. It appears that the amount of cover out there will play a large factor in the harvest numbers for a few more weeks. Not seeing any grouse in the bag checks. It doesn't appear that they are that abundant in this area.

ESTIMATED WATERFOWL STATUS/OPPORTUNITY FOR FALL RIVER COUNTY AND WESTERN SHANNON COUNTY:

County	FALL RIVER		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

County	WESTERN SHANNON		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows

NE	2	2	0
NW	1	2	0

NE			
NW	1	2	0

ESTIMATED WATERFOWL STATUS/OPPORTUNITY FOR CUSTER COUNTY:

County	CUSTER		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE	1	1	0
NW	0	0	0

County	Pennington		
	Canadas	Ducks	Snows
NE			
NW	0	0	0

Please take the time to record a license number and vehicle description when you witness a fish or game violation. Don't hesitate to call the TIP's Hotline or the local Sheriff's Office and report the violators. You will help us all preserve the sport!!

Date: 10/23/2014